

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

By Hand 14 June

MEMO FOR Allen Dulles

Thought you might
find the attached of
personal interest.

Ed Kaufdale

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THE "TRUE AMERICAN"

(The following remarks were made by Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale, USAF, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, for Special Operations, when asked to comment on reports of a deterioration of Philippine-American relationships.)

I.

If there is truth in reports that relationships between Filipinos and Americans have deteriorated in the Philippines, then a priceless heritage has started to be squandered.

II.

On the American side of this relationship, we should look first to our own part in any losing of this heritage. We cannot fall into the error of being self-righteous. It is a moment for honest thinking and acting in good faith.

The key to constructive American behavior in the Philippines lies in a wise understanding and use of the positive elements of U.S. relations. Perhaps not enough Americans have this understanding. Maybe we should be more cautious in our listening to "experts" and pay more heed to how they have come to know that of which they speak. Observing the surface of a situation, even in minute detail, is no guarantee that what lies below the surface is seen also.

It would be significant to learn more about the American "experts" who act for us and speak profoundly to us in carrying forward our relationships with the Philippine government and people. When was the "expert" last invited to be a guest in an "average" Filipino household to share a meal? When did he last spend a night with Filipinos in the provinces? When did he last travel in the provinces in a manner permitting the gathering of real opinions? In other words, does he honestly know whereof he speaks? Or, does he merely know Manila, the largest city, and a coterie of acquaintances? If the latter, then he would be the counterpart of a bright Filipino living in New York and attempting to interpret the whole United States from what he sees and hears in one city. City views become even less meaningful in a country that is largely agrarian.

If not the counsel of "experts", then where do we turn? Here is a suggestion: make use of the lessons in the history of Americans in the Philippines. The Americans who have enjoyed the warmest friendships with the Filipinos, among our diplomats, military, and business people, have all had such an awareness of the past.

III.

There are definite guide lines for American behavior in the Philippines which can be learned from Filipino confidences about Americans they have known in the past. From such confidences, there will emerge a description of a "true American" as the Filipinos saw him. An American who strives to behave in this pattern today will find his friendship returned richly, wherever he is in the Philippines, and regardless of his personal position. If he fails to appreciate this pattern, an American will find himself in a "bogus" position, regardless of what authority, pragmatic rewards, or weapons he uses as an American.

I use the word "bogus", because the Filipino is adept at what some of them call "the deep freeze"--a surface compliance or agreeableness while hiding their true feelings. I know Americans who have spent many years in the Philippines, who believe they share affection with the Filipinos, but who secretly admit to themselves or intimates that the Filipino is often a child. They would be amazed to know that this is reciprocated by the Filipinos giving them "the deep freeze". Many Filipinos share a talent I have noted elsewhere in Asia--a sort of radar that searches out the true psyche of an American or European--finding hidden attitudes of superiority, which are resented.

IV.

Who, then, is this "true American" as seen by the Filipinos of an age to be in positions of decisive influence on Filipino-American relations? Here are some outstanding examples:

a. The "Thomasites", the civilian teachers sent to the Philippines by the War Department on the transport "Thomas" to start a public school system, brought a courageous and unselfish ideal of public service with them. Both Roxas and Magsaysay were influenced by this ideal. Both have commented to intimates about the "civics" classes introduced by these teachers, a morality in public office reflecting the principles stressed by American leaders early in this century.

b. Leonard Wood, as Governor General, probably evoked stronger reactions from Filipinos than any other American. He was admired, respected, or feared. Not loved. Not despised. A number of Filipinos now most influential in public life today remember him vividly. Even a Recto, who had no cause to love him, admits that Wood had a strong set of ethics which he upheld, come hell or high water, and which took him courageously into situations of physical danger. The "golden rule" philosophy of Albino Sycip stems from his association with Wood; Albino will reminisce for hours about Wood to a sympathetic listener.

c. The U.S. soldier of the early years of the century left a definite imprint. Douglas MacArthur, as a 2nd Lieutenant in Mindanao, is a memory nearly as strong as the "I Shall Return" General. This was the memory of the lone American enforcing justice for all, despite threats to his life. The old book, "Jungle Patrol", is filled with stories of these American soldiers. It has the flavor of "High Noon", the expert sheriff all alone facing the guns of the gang of bad-men while the townsmen hide. This has a strongly moving appeal to Filipinos, and they respond by joining up with such an American, even at risk of life. Our Liberation forces in 1945 evoked this feeling; the combat soldiers gave every evidence that they knew what they were doing and moved right in on the enemy; our troops in turn were surprised at the way the Filipinos came flocking in to join them in combat.

d. These same U.S. combat troops, while getting ready for the planned invasion of Japan, were stationed in towns and barrios throughout the Philippines. It was the first time that the majority of Filipinos had a chance to mingle with Americans on an equal footing. The impact was terrific, and largely a great plus for the United States. Later in 1945, after V-Day, and since, the attitude of nearly all Americans in the Philippines changed--the Filipinos no longer had houses that looked good to jungle-weary Americans, the sound of our own language on the lips of hospitable "natives" lost its novelty. This change in American attitude was reflected by the Filipino, whose sensitive "radar" is always searching attitudes.

e. In all of the most-remembered Americans, the most endearing quality to the Filipino was that the American trusted him. Being trusted is rare in the Philippines, between themselves as well as between Filipinos and Americans. When trust is bestowed, wisely, the result is the strongest bond between men of different races ever known. Colonel Gyles Merrill had such a bond with the Magsaysay brothers. Ramon and Jesus. However, a story I heard from several Filipinos on the staff of Quezon in the dark days of Corregidor and Bataan illustrates the reaction to "trust" even more pointedly.

V.

This is the story the Filipinos told me.

On Corregidor, Quezon was overwhelmed with reports of disaster to his people, from place after place in the Philippines. Finally, at the seeming nadir of bad news, he sent a radio message to President Roosevelt. In it, he pointed out that the Philippines had promised to fight alongside the United States, but now there had been defeat after defeat, and the enemy was occupying all but a few miles of his country; further resistance by the Filipinos could only bring bloodshed and destruction to civilian areas by the

Japanese who were promising to respect the Filipinos if they would only quit fighting; so, would the United States please release the Philippines from this agreement?

Back came a reply from the White House, signed by the President of the U.S.A. It was simple. The Filipinos were free to do as they thought best in this dreadful hour. We knew they would do the right thing. As for the Americans, we had promised to defend the Philippines and, as long as an American was left alive, we would strive to keep our promise.

This message was read by Quezon and his staff in Malinta Tunnel, with unashamed tears of emotion. They determined not to quit. The story of the message, its spirit, and the final decision of Quezon gradually seeped out of the Bataan-Corregidor area and became known by whispered word from province to province. The spirit of trust, exemplified by this message, was the fundamentally moving spirit which led to the guerrilla movement-- and its strong expression of brotherhood between Filipinos and Americans which really amazed the world. This was not the paternalistic "little brown brother". The word "little" just didn't exist in this bond. I only wish that more Americans would remember this bond, or that more Americans could have heared the sort of wistful admiration for it that I have heard from many, many Europeans and Asians.

VI.

The "true American" thus emerges as a larger-than-life image: a person of integrity, with the courage of his convictions, with competence in some technical field, with devotion to getting things done, and with Christian affection for his fellow man.

Admittedly, this is an ideal which human weaknesses make it difficult to achieve. But, if an American is striving to live up to this in his daily life, the Filipino will recognize it and be strongly attracted to such a person, responding to his unselfish motives. It doesn't matter whether or not the year is 1901, 1920, 1945, 1950, 1953, or 1960. This ideal has been a relatively constant factor in otherwise widely differing situations.

I learned this the hard way, myself. In 1945 and 1946, I was told over and over again that the American day was over, because the American no longer was in a position of governing power as in the pre-war colonial era. In 1950, upon return to the Philippines, I was told that the situation was so different from when I left in 1948, that an American could really not move

around in the country. In 1956, during a visit, I was told that the situation was completely changed from 1953. In 1959, when visiting again, Americans told me that the situation prevented Americans from doing anything really constructive in the Philippines.

My own belief is that a lack of perception and a moral laziness are no excuse for those Americans who should be exerting influence for the good of both our peoples and are not. When we make bad selections in our representatives, the Filipinos know it. They aren't about to listen seriously to an American for whom they can have scant respect, regardless of his official position. It is foolish of us to expect them to do so. This situation becomes even more poignant when you realize the great hunger of the Filipinos to have these "true Americans" among them, to turn to for understanding and constructive help.

Between 1898 and 1960, this spirit of the "true American" has had a strong appeal for many an American in the Philippines. When Americans responded with enthusiastic willingness to this appeal, they were repaid with an affectionate acceptance by the Filipinos which was so heart-warming an experience that, even years afterwards, they speak of it with emotion. The Filipinos have equally vivid memories of these Americans.

VII.

What does this mean in practical, working terms to us today?

First of all, we have Americans who would gladly work in the Philippines in the spirit described above. It takes a person with this same spirit to encourage, guide, and protect such efforts. A lesser person could kill off the effort through narrowmindedness or a seeming pragmatism in trying to obtain short-term results. The man who sticks to the book written by parochial clerks or who grabs the golden eggs and doesn't understand the death of the goose is hardly the person to be responsible for such an understanding.

So, there are Americans available for this task. The task is very demanding, since it has to be lived and cannot be a pose. It is demanding in time and energy, as well as psychologically. As Filipinos respond, time must be spent with them. Those Americans who have done this sincerely and thoroughly know from hard experience the grind of work this entails. Working honestly close up is one hell of a lot different than sitting in an office reading information from "objective" aloofness or of learning the scene second-hand through a few selected contacts who specialize in scandal and gossip.

In their dealing with Filipinos, these Americans should realize that "true Filipinos" are needed every bit as much as "true Americans". Patriotism is far different than the brand of nationalism espoused by some Filipinos. Thus, highly-principled patriotism should be nurtured in these relationships. The ideals of the Philippine Constitution are in harmony with our own ideals, and a Filipino who unselfishly works towards strengthening those ideals is very much on the same road as we are in striving towards our own national policy objectives. This Filipino cannot be diverted away from constancy towards these ideals without damage.

I should make it plain that I am not advocating the creation of a band of dewy-eyed idealists to run around doing good turns for everyone. What I have tried to say is that a certain spirit has been missing and that, if it is replaced, the results will be those we truly seek. Effective American actions require the guidance of mature judgement and the highest type of discipline, including self-discipline. Given the presence of these factors, the whole climate of relationships can brighten to permit us to have a teamwork with Filipinos really consonant with a United States which is the leading nation in the world.

To me, it should be obvious that the qualities which make a "true American" welcome in the hearts of our Filipino friends will also find a kindred response among men of good-will throughout the world. As we realize our share of the heritage in the Philippines, we will gain further strength in that dedication to high principles expected of us by all who hunger for a true champion of individual liberty. This strength we must have or all else that we possess and do will be without lasting meaning.